

# Community of Grace

## Daily Walk for the week of September 14, 2020

**Psalm 85:10...Forgiveness**  
**Written by Vicar Jamie Witt**

**Monday, September 14, 2020**

### **Grace-filled Community**

“Welcome those who are weak in faith, but not for the purpose of quarreling over opinions.” Romans 14:1. Paul is addressing people who practice their faith differently. Some are devout rule followers about what is considered right to eat and observe and some others who no longer follow those strict rules. Each group feels their way of leading a life of faith is correct. Paul calls them to come together and welcome one another but not in order to debate whose way is right, but to live together in love of neighbor. Quarreling breaks up community. Paul wants them to restore community. Clearly some arguments may have already happened, in which case forgiveness is needed in order to move forward. Both parties have accused the other of being wrong and feelings have been hurt. Even when we think our position is still correct, that doesn't change how the other person received our words, perhaps causing hurt. We offer forgiveness for the hurt caused, even if it was maybe well intentioned. We are meant to live in relationship with each other in community. We are not perfect, and conflicts will happen. That's why forgiveness is so important, and God calls us to extend it as freely as God extends it to us. By doing this we preserve community, creating one that grows in grace. Prayer: “Lord, when I think I'm right and someone else is wrong help me to remember that they are also Your child and feel things just as I do. Help me to choose my words carefully when I talk to them, making sure love finds a way to come through. Amen.”

**Tuesday, September 15, 2020**

### **Unspeakable Joy**

“He [God] does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities.” Psalm 103:10. Thank goodness and God be

praised for that! I've certainly made my share of mistakes and sinned. I'm so grateful that I serve the Triune God that doesn't judge me based on each of those mistakes but offers me forgiveness and grace freely when I come to God. I am forgiven and blessed and for this I am so very grateful. By receiving such incredible grace and love from our Creator we are called to take all that joy and gratitude we feel and share it with others. We are not required to do “good works” to be justified by God. We are given that by grace through faith. That knowledge should fill us up and make us want to dance. We live our faith when we offer that same grace to others. When we show kindness, love, and forgiveness. When we recognize that we too have made mistakes and wouldn't want to be held accountable for each and every one so why would we want to hold someone else accountable for their every mistake? God loves you dear saint and sinner, now go out and love all those who God loves (and spoiler alert: that means all whom God has created—all of creation.) Prayer: “Creator God, You have made all things living on earth and have declared them good, even us. When we make mistakes thank You for loving us in a place of forgiveness. Help us to extend an invitation to that place to others so we may live together in love with one another. Amen.”

**Psalm 85:10...Equality**  
**Written by Mary Anderson**

**Wednesday, September 16<sup>th</sup>**

**Praise**

### **God's Greatness**

“I will extol you, my God and King, and bless your name forever and ever. Every day I will bless you, and praise your name forever and ever. Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; his greatness is unsearchable.” Psalm 145:1-3. This psalm of David is one of praise to our God who is such a great God. He created us and our world. He only asks that we love him and praise his name in all we do. As verse 4 goes on to say,

we are not to flatter God with our praise but to share it with our children and with all generations. Our lives should bear witness to all he has done so others will come to know God and be in relationship with him. May we find ways even in this pandemic to share all that God has done by showing kindness to others even when "masked", sending notes or cards or letting others know we care with a phone call. May we bless God's name forever. **Prayer:** Creator of all, let your light of truth shine within us. May we always praise you and speak your truth and goodness, that all might know your mercy and greatness, finding wholeness perfected in you. Amen

**Thursday, September 17<sup>th</sup>      God's Mercy**

"On the glorious splendor of your majesty, and on your wondrous works, I will meditate. The might of your awesome deeds shall be proclaimed, and I will declare your greatness...The Lord is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love." Psalm 145:5-6, 8. God asks us not only to praise his name but to meditate or spend time in his Word so we can see again how wonderful he is in all he has done for us. Verse 8 is a reminder and statement of faith, God is full of grace and mercy and full of steadfast, never-ending love for us all. We all equally receive forgiveness for all of our sins for he is a loving God and "slow to anger". Because I am retired, I should have more time to dwell in God's word and I do try to do that daily. But even for those whose job is essential and you have worked throughout this pandemic, or those who recently returned to work or a student as school has begun again, you can find/make time to spend in God's word in the morning or evening. We can all focus on God's love for us, know he is with us in our busyness, loneliness and struggles and we can praise his name by our actions and deeds. Let us all take time to share God's love, worship him in thought, word and deed and know he is there beside us always. **Prayer:** Your patience and care, O Lord,

are exquisite, like the drop of dew that clings to the leaf in the morning. Like that leaf, may we know your caress and drink from your life-giving goodness. Amen

**Friday, September 18<sup>th</sup>**

**God's Steadfast Love**

"When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil ways, God changed his mind about the calamity that he had said he would bring upon them and he did not do it. But this was very displeasing to Jonah, and he became angry. He prayed to the Lord and said, 'O Lord! Is not this what I said while I was still in my own country? That is why I fled to Tarshish at the beginning; for I knew that you are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and ready to relent from punishing.'" Jonah 3:10-4:2. Sometimes we think that the will of God is set and can't be influenced or changed. Verse 10 reminds us that God's mercy and loving kindness is stronger than his determination to punish his creation. Jonah ran away because he knew God was a loving God and would forgive the people of Nineveh if they turned from their evil ways. Here again as in David's Psalm 145, God is lifted up as a gracious God who is slow to anger. Yes, his love is steadfast, never-ending to all of us equally as he was to Jews and non-Jews. He asks for our obedience and that we accept his love and direction in our lives, knowing he is with us and will lead us in the right and best way. Our God is an awesome God! **Prayer:** Standing on the shoulders of our ancestors, we witness the generations who faithfully addressed their changing times. May we graciously pass the mantle of leadership to the generations following us that they may always know your guidance. Amen

**Saturday, September 19<sup>th</sup>**

**God's Care of Creation**

"But God said to Jonah, 'Is it right for you to be angry about the bush?' And he said, 'Yes, angry enough to die.' Then the Lord said, 'You are concerned about the bush for which you did not

labor and which you did not grow; it came into being in a night and perished in a night. And should I not be concerned about Nineveh, that great city in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand persons who do not know their right from their left, and also many animals?" Jonah 4:9-11. Just as God sent a fish to save Jonah, he sent a bush to provide shade for him for a day. But the next day God caused the bush that he had made to die so Jonah sat in the heat all that day and just wanted to die. God comes back to Jonah to ask him why he shouldn't save Nineveh, a city of more than 120,000 lost people plus animals. God loved all of his creation, mankind and animals alike, Jew or non-Jews. Have you ever had a time when you felt the situation you were in was so bad, whether being so hot or so cold you couldn't stand it, or physically or emotionally hurting so bad you wanted it just to end? I know I have cried out to God in despair to remove me from such a destructive situation or feeling and he has done that over time. When my husband slipped and fell after getting out of the shower and starting to walk on the tile floor with wet feet, ending up with an open fracture of his right ankle and in a lot of pain, he asked one of the policemen who responded to my 911 call with the EMTs, firemen and ambulance to just shoot him. Of course he didn't, he understood his pain and all the men helped him up in tight quarters onto the gurney. Accidents can happen quickly but we need to trust God that he is there for us in the midst of our pain or loneliness and will carry us through. (God went with me in my car to the University hospital where emergency surgery was done by an excellent surgeon on call on a Sunday and the nurse where he was admitted was someone I had worked with there almost 30 years earlier with my same name!) God provides for us and loves us all as well as the animals and all of his creation. We too need to love and pray for all those he created. **Prayer:** Lord, you created us to live

in community. As our relationships and faith in you grow and mature, help us build up our neighbors, no matter their backgrounds, in ways that protect them and do not diminish their relationship with you. Amen

**Sunday, September 20<sup>th</sup>**

**Laboring for God**

"For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. After agreeing with the laborers for the usual daily wage, he sent them into his vineyard. When he went out about nine o'clock, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace and he said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.' So they went." Matthew 20:1-4. This begins the familiar parable of the workers in the vineyard. The landowner needed men to work in his vineyard and added workers he found idle all day, at noon and 5 o'clock also because there was a lot of work to be done. God invites all of us to be his workers in the kingdom as well and whether we got to know God and Christ as a child in the early years of our lives, or in adulthood, we are all equal in his eyes. He calls everyone to be his children, sharing his gospel with others, loving one another as he has loved us. I was blessed to start learning about God and his Son, Jesus, at an early age in Sunday school and my faith has grown over the years and is still growing. Someone else may have only met and gotten to know Him in adulthood. We can all grow together in God's love no matter when we came to first know him. He is our Father and will always be there for us. **Prayer:** Through your Spirit, Lord, you give us wisdom, understanding, and joy in your presence which empowers us to avoid the evil one. In this relationship of trust, guide us to value those you give us to serve. Amen